

CSUF student doubles as DJ

By Joe Bustillos
Daily Titan

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Two months ago, Bedard began working the prime-time Friday and Saturday night shifts as DJ at the Red Onion in Fullerton. A seven-

year veteran of dance clubs in Houston and Southern California, Bedard has come to terms with being the lone female in a male dominated profession.

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It's a bit inaccurate to say that her audience doesn't really pay attention. It's more that the attention she receives is positive. Her co-workers joke about the ring of men who camp around her booth when she works as opposed to the women who usually station themselves there when the male DJs work. But Bedard added that if she can't keep the dance floor occupied that no amount of flirting or being cute is going to help her keep her job.

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See Bedard, page 9



Ardent feminist Michele Bedard.

Bedard

Continued from page 2

mine that women rely on and get ahead on their looks, and that men judge them by their looks. I think that people should just do what they should do and if they're good at it they should just do it," she said.

Bedard attributes her "just do it" attitude to her independently spirited English-Canadian mother who fostered in her an egalitarian approach to dealing with other races and people.

"If we would have (used derogatory racist terms) when we were kids, my mom would have beat us, seriously beat us."

But she was aware as a child growing up in Montreal, Canada, that people just didn't treat each other that way in the real world. Bedard learned that this was particularly true about the way that men and women treat each other.

"In the real world the real hang up for men is this economic thing: Do you have a gold card, do you drive a certain type of car? For women the hang up is: Do you have big breasts, do you have symmetrical facial features, are you underweight, are you fair complected, are you young? I mean, a man can be older, he can be heavier, he can be a lot of things and still be considered attractive because men are judged on their personality elements far more, in terms of percentages. I would argue that the real stereotype is that men are like, 'Well, so what do you do?' and that's it. That's the end of the conversation if you don't qualify. I think the equivalent thing is to women, 'How big is your bra

size?'"

Working in a profession that occasionally calls for running "Naughty Nightie" or various bikini contests, one can imagine the slight conflict that ensues between Bedard the professional DJ and Bedard the feminist.

She said that she would rather have more people-oriented contests like trivia contests than the bikini contests because "I know how the women feel. If I went into a club and I saw a bikini contest and I was with my boyfriend, I'd walk out. Any self respecting woman in the place would walk out."

But then the DJ added, "If I run it, I run it professionally. I tell the guys to give the girls a round of applause and run it exactly the same as any guy would run it. The fact is if the demand wasn't there the thing wouldn't exist, and me sitting there having a personal conflict about it isn't going to change anything."

"I know the realities of the business," the feminist countered, "I've been doing this for seven years. I know that bikini contests draw men. I think they're self-defeating in the long run because you only draw men. The good women don't come in. The men come to see the women. The women aren't there, then the men leave. So I think it's a self-defeating promotion. And I also think it's dated."

Bedard explained that her aggressiveness is a necessary requirement to succeed as a female DJ, but she looked forward a more balanced world.

"Women are socialized not to be

competitive, not to be aggressive, but to be nurturers, all those stereotypes that we all know and love. But I think people would be best if they were more rounded. I would love to see men more nurturing and women more aggressive," she said.

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67 lines

Profile: Michele Bedard

Why would you put a come thru?

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1. NOT A
WORD TO
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2. You're
misreading
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Any particular place in Canada?

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Talent: To do easily what is difficult for others. Henry F. Amiel

(Something) everyone has at twenty five. The difficult is to have it at fifty. Edgar Degas

Each man has his vocation. Talent is the call. Ralph Waldo Emerson

(The) power and courage to make a new road to new and better goals. Ralph Waldo Emerson

The tools to him who has the ability to handle them. French proverb

The confidence that by persistence and patience something worthwhile will be realized. Thus talent is a species of vigor. Eric Hoffer.

A gift which God has given us secretly, and which we reveal without perceiving it. Charles de Montesquieu

To have talent, one must have character: abilities and natural disposition by themselves make no talent. Rahel L. Varnhagen
An infinite capacity for imitating genius. Anon.

MICHELE BEDARD INTERVIEW (11/03/89, Red Onion, Fullerton, CA)

TAPE ONE - SIDE ONE

canada-us history 000 -025

childhood, CA -035 (date)

high school '78 -075 (anti-disco, poetic justice)

hawaii '80 -100 (led zep to jazz . . . good life,
mellow, 18 years old, too young to retire, boyfriend supporting,
waitressing)

houston '81 -190 (lived with brother, getting into
dancing, soul artists only on black radio stations)(choices to
Canada:french, CA:w/ mom again, houston: univ of houston,
radio/tv ---guided by girlfriend with dj boyfriend . . .
cocktailing to support self)

dj holiday-inn gig '83 -270 (thought it'd be perfect intro to
radio dj-ing, asked to mess with equip on some saturday, call on
sunday to cover for one dj . . . lied her way into it-time to
payback --- no one there, learned how run turntables, switch on
volume . . .

"this was a country bar, I had to play country. I didn't have
anything else. It was like 90 percent country and there was
like a tiny winnie little bin, they had like three or four other
records like Michael Jackson, and that was about it. And that
was when they still called that stuff 'niger music.' I hated
that so much. Me, I was always color-blind. If we would have
done, like, 'einee meenie minee moe, catch a niger by the toe'
when I was a kid my mom would have beat us, seriously beat us.
'Cause my mom majored in history, and like did African history,

MB - never an to hold a
apart to herself.

and my mom's really educated. She would have beat us . . . "

from radio station live -370 (never saw anyone dance before her arrival, background music, volunteered to cover any shift . . . other dj left, only one left . . . only \$5 an hour, trivia rage, t-shirt giveaways, Prickly Pear --> 3x business in one year. happy hour crowd staying later, coming in on weekends to dance) lyrics to "The Rodeo Song": "Here comes Johnny with his pecker in his hand, he's a one night stand and we're off to the rodeo. Went on the stage, goddam jerk, get off. Piss me off, fucking jerk, get on my nerves, get off." It was like a really stupid backwards type song . . .

competitor boyfriend -480 (counting the beats, club-aholic, Todd's--never cleared his dance-floor, more dance music, 3/4 years after urban cowboy)

SIDE TWO

continued -020 (played the Romantics before "What I Like About You" had become popular, had to pay boyfriend to train her, really guarded about what he knew, "I had to pay this guy to train me after he was my boyfriend," consultation firm agreed to pay for her training, mixing and phrasing, quantum leap in ability,

Time to move -047 (after two years all the djs she knew were being paid \$15-\$20 p/h and she was still at \$7.50, asked for \$10 couldn't do it)

"It's true they had raised me quite a bit. They had raised me \$3 an hour, but the thing was I said, 'Look, I know what I'm worth,' and I was just stupid enough about business to think that once I had proved my worth [that] they would pay me. And not only wouldn't they do that, they really couldn't do it. The manager couldn't just jump me up to \$15 an hour. It was like a point of honor with me. I said, 'Look, I've slaved for you for two years, I know that I'm as good as anybody out there, I deserve to be paid. And I went right down the street and jumped from \$7 an hour to \$15 an hour at a neighboring hotel. So I doubled my salary. But I ended up in a dead room, which was a drag. . . " going to school and rotting in this bar

"I decided that I wanted to get rid of him and get rid of Houston." Jettison the boyfriend AND the town. "Jettison the package"

CA, ready for the fast lane '86 -100 (cocktailing around, hired at RO Santa Ana as cocktail hostess, addition for Baxter's/Rueben's 6 guys vs. her --- happy hour at Monrovia Rueben's, club ratings (from the bottom): Rueben's, Black Angus, Bobby McGees, Baxter's, Red Onion-Peppers, independent LA clubs. within two weeks playing lead guy's set (he didn't know how to

mix, helped her but didn't have her technique)

went to Baxter's -113 ("none of the Rueben's djs know how to mix which is what put them on the lower level, then you get to baxter's, they know how to mix but most of them played video and not many of them were great club djs." Newport.)

girl djs -150 ("It was unusual enough to be a girl doing what I was doing---there were some girls at Rueben's on the lower levels. In fact I never knew any girl djs in Houston, when I was in Houston I never met one. So I didn't have a role model when I went in. I mean, I just went in and did it. I had a complex for a long time thinking that people would come in and they would say, 'Well, there's a girl up there.' And I don't know why I thought that, but I did think that. I thought of it in a negative way. And just because they had never seen it. . . Because I evaluate djs I just thought everybody did. I didn't realize they just came in and sort of had a good time and didn't really pay that much attention."

"It was enough to be a woman dj period, and then when I got to Baxter's, well, they didn't have any women at Baxter's period. And for me to get the audition to work in Newport, which at the time was one of their lower stores, which is true of any change and any dj and not because I was a woman they always start you out at the bottom, just because of businesses, the hierarchy." started at lower wage than expected, \$13-14, with other club's looking for her services RO and Confetti's [McFadden: lance McFadden, pop art, free buffet pate and shrimp, innovative]

Went to Club Rio -200 (disillusioned with Baxter's 80% videos, wanted to mix; Monrovia, two djs and a light person. one of two women in the Confetti's/McFadden organization with clubs all over the country. 100 djs and two of them women.

Politics/conflict with main dj -260 (fired for drinking in the booth, not a performance problem, not a personal problem, got involved with another dj "and it screwed everything up between me and him. And what happened is I threatened to quit and they fired me. So it was a bad scene but it was a bad choice on my part, getting involved with him and not realizing that business is business. Just to go in, it doesn't matter how good you are, business is business. You have to go in and see it like that. You can't expect that other people will understand your personal life in business. I was naive."

Back to Baxter's -340 (Fullerton, Manhattan Beach lead--still only woman dj at Baxter's, 20 stores '86 Rio: "short term thing, it could have been a big thing, I should have just suppressed my thing and let that be a giant step for me but I didn't and made a big mistake." Do you think you'd become too confident/quick upward moves? "I think I did." Didn't go back to RO 'cause grip against RO for not hiring her the first time when best over five males---though goal to go with RO - stayed with

Baxter's into school---then robotic playing . . . received 3 rating after winning awards

Onto Red Onion -360 (Riverside after 3 auditions.

Role of school -430 ("[school] never faded out. School has always been my top priority. I have always gone three or four courses every semester, I'm holding steady at a 3.8 [gpa] right now. I've been on the dean's list every semester since I've gone to school. This year finally reaping the benefits, National Gold Key Honor, I'm probably going to get the Comm honors, and of course the dean's list all this time. I never realized what an accomplishment that was when I first started. I just thought an 'A' was easy for me to get when I first started. I just never thought that it was that big of a deal and then I realized, you know, after all these years, getting a substantial level of achievement, I'm ready to get recognized for it, whenever that does happen at the end when I graduate."

only 'B's in classes with no interest or when needing slack, just have to get 'b' because of time/job pressures. "I can't tolerate to get less than an 'A' because I know I can get an 'A.'" only 2 'C's in college career, not classes but tests.

beautiful women -145 (integrated, pet-peeve, young girl always understood attractive people could get along without relying on their personalities, and I never let that be a reason to be . . . " popular in high school, "being an eternal liberal as a young child I always felt that people were equal, I always. I never realized until I got older that people had inherited and in-born disadvantages and advantages . And I never gave myself credit for those things, and in a way it's been an advantage and a way that it's been a disadvantage. But the way it formed by view was that as a child I always thought that, 'Well, I'm not anymore talented than anyone else, even though I could draw.' I thought anyone could do it if they just practiced. Egalitarian, I would say, 'Do you want to learn to draw? I'll show you how to draw.' And so it just became to the point of I could do all these things and I never realized, like I was on the gymnastics team and I could draw and I could write and I was a great student. And I just never wanted to put myself above anybody. I don't know if it's a personal outlook or an egalitarian view, due to my liberal upbringing. Anti-judgemental."

Anti-men -160 ("When I was a kid in grade six I had a club, the Knickerbacker's club, an anti-man club, 'Anything you can do I can do better.' My brother always called me 'little Helen Reddy,' 'I am woman . . . ' I always say, 'I bring home the bacon, I fry it in the pan, I never do but I can. . .'" name came from some song, time of the ERA movement, mom vs. dad for not achieving, "Me growing up as a very intelligent youngster going, 'What is the deal here, why can't I . . . ' And with all those questions, just taking it for granted that I could [do anything a man could do]. Just taking it for granted that those

were the ways things were and then finding out later that was just the picture that was painted. Those aren't the facts, things are still the way that they were. There's still the same prejudice against women that there was, and the doors may be a little more open to opportunity but people still have the same mind set."

The Vogue years -177 (cerebral upbringing "I was never going to rest on [my laurels]. When I was a kid it was like, [sarcastically] 'I'm sure I'm going to look at 'Vogue' so I can decide what color lipstick I'm going to wear. I go, 'Women's magazines are about this' and I go that's bullshit."

No cosmo? "Well, I've gone through stages. Everyone wants to be attractive. The fact is that men are more visual than women, I've realized this in my later years. But I've always, it always been a pet peeve of mine that women rely on and get ahead on their looks and that men judge them by their looks---by both sexes, it happens by both sexes. I think that people should just do what they should do and if they're good at it they should do it. And it's like, no one's going to tell me what I can't do . . . "

Achievement and her looks -200 ("When I very first started djing I was so afraid that people would think I got my job for my looks because I was a woman that I would dress down. I wore masculine clothes to work, I never wore a pair of heels, I would never wear a dress. This was way past 'Annie Hall.'

"I had a big complex about being a woman in the job, that they would think I was less good at it, and that I always had to go way far out of my way to prove myself, because I felt . . . You know, it's just such a complicated thing how somebody could think that. How could you think that you'd be less good at it just because you're a woman? Look how it affects me."

"You could say that men's physique in terms of powerfulness might be a factor on certain occasions requiring media-type coverage like an election. But in the real world the real hang up for men is this economic thing: do you have a gold card, do you drive a certain type of car. That's the real double standard against men. Not: do you have big breasts, do you have symmetrical facial features, are you under weight, are you fair complected, are you young? I mean, a man can be older, he can be heavier, he can be a lot of things and still be considered attractive because men are judged on their personality elements far more, in terms of percentages. I would argue that the real stereotype is, the real cold harsh awful thing, if you could parallel anything to the way women are judged in cookie-cutter shapes, is the fact that men are like, 'Well, so what do you do?' and that's it, that's the end of the conversation if you don't qualify. I think the equivalent thing is to women, 'How big is your bra size?' to the man is, 'Well, what do you do?'